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Coordination segment

Provisional summary record (partial)* of the 25th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 9 July 2008, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Lima (Vice-President) ..... (Cape Verde)

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The role of the United Nations system in implementing the ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2007 of the Council (*continued*)

* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting. A panel discussion was conducted.

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The meeting was preceded by a panel discussion on the topic of "Coherence: Strengthening the normative and operational link in the work of the United Nations on rural employment". The panel was chaired by Mr. Antonio Pedro Monteiro Lima (Cape Verde), Vice-President of the Council, and moderated by Mr. Assane Diop, Executive Director, Social Protection Sector, International Labour Organization. The Panellists were Mr. Tareq Md. Ariful Islam, Vice-Chairperson, Commission for Social Development; Mr. Olivier Belle, Chairperson, Commission on the Status of Women; Mr. Juan Eduardo Eguiguren, representative of the Chairperson, Commission on Science and Technology for Development; Mr. José Eduardo Dantas Ferreira Barbosa, President, Executive Board, World Food Programme; Mr. Jean-Marie Ehouzou, Chairperson, Executive Board, United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund; and Mr. Zdzislaw Rapacki, Chairperson, Governing Council, International Labour Organization.

In the absence of Mr. Mérorès (Haiti), Mr. Lima (Cape Verde), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The discussion covered in the summary record began at 12.25 p.m.

The role of the United Nations system in implementing the ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2007 of the Council (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Stelzer** (Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs) recalled that the coordination segment had focused on several aspects of the eradication of poverty and hunger: food security, rural development and the challenges of social welfare, violence against women in all its forms and manifestations, and coherence between the normative and operational work of the United Nations system on the issue of rural employment.

2. The global food crisis had highlighted important gaps in the system's approach to food security. In particular, it had emphasized the tenuous link between emergency response to immediate food needs and longer-term development strategies for sustainable food production. The crisis had provided an opportunity to reflect on current approaches and to reorient strategies and policies. Discussions during the segment had shown that there was consensus on the need to tackle the food crisis, climate change and energy shortages comprehensively within the framework of sustainable development. The system had moved quickly to devise a comprehensive strategy; the challenge now was to make it operational.

3. The discussions had also shown that the United Nations system should refocus on the need to make the rural sector an engine of growth and poverty eradication by ensuring that strategies for sustainable agricultural and rural development fully integrated the social dimension. The system had an important role to play in enhancing understanding of the social impact of rural and agricultural development policies, especially on employment; helping formulate national poverty eradication strategies; and supporting countries' efforts to allocate scarce resources to critical sectors. United Nations agencies needed to join forces in enhancing their analytical and research capacity to supplement national efforts.

4. Rural employment was central to poverty eradication. Three quarters of the world's poor lived in areas where a paucity of economic opportunities; under-investment; poor infrastructure and public services, including education; and underdeveloped markets compounded the difficulties of employment creation. The United Nations recognized the centrality of employment, especially rural employment, to the eradication of poverty and hunger and had promoted a comprehensive policy framework for addressing the problem. The broad consensus on that framework had promoted greater coherence and cooperation within the system at the normative and operational levels. As the preceding panel discussion had shown, the challenges in strengthening the system's efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger involved not only scaling up current initiatives but adopting more comprehensive approaches.

5. Violence against women persisted in all regions of the world as a pervasive violation of human rights and a major impediment to achieving gender equality, as well as poverty eradication and development. Prevention was essential and discussions during the segment had stressed the need for better tools to identify and tackle the problem. The Council's functional commissions had a critical role to play; lessons from their work should be shared within the United Nations system and the coordination segment had provided a platform for doing so.

6. **The President** said that there was consensus on the need to rethink current strategies and policies for dealing with the global food crisis. It was imperative to take immediate, concerted action that made short-term interventions fully compatible with longer-term strategies. New approaches needed to take into account the problem's multiple causes and its social, economic and environmental consequences for most countries. The approach developed and promoted by the United Nations system emphasized the need for coordinated action, especially between humanitarian and development interventions, and for a coherent, comprehensive framework for action within the context of sustainable development.

7. The need to refocus on agriculture and rural development had also emerged as a clear message from debate on the crisis. Agricultural development was essential to poverty eradication and economic growth, but it was not sustainable unless accompanied by social development. The challenge was to ensure balanced interaction between social programmes and agricultural and rural development.

8. Women were an important untapped resource for social and economic growth in the majority of developing countries, and empowering them ensured rapid progress towards the MDGs. Violence against women was not only a dehumanizing practice that should be eliminated in its own right, but a major obstacle to achievement of Goal 1 of the MDGs.

9. The Council could play a prominent role in ensuring that the objective of full rural employment was at the centre of efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger as an integral part of the United Nations system strategy. The segment had highlighted the work being done at the policy level and the need to translate that work into action at the country level, including by providing a platform for the normative and operational agencies of the system in order to harmonize their work.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.